

**NORTH COUNTRY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE NCUHS LIBRARY**

Board Members Present: Arne Amalixsen, Steve Brochu, Ken Canning, Rick Geisel, Rose Mary Mayhew, Harold Morse, Peter Moskovites, Muriel O’Gorman, June Rosenberg

Board Members Absent: Richard Cartee (Newport City), Joe Gregersen (Newport Town), James Privee (Newport City), Holland Rep, Morgan Rep, Newport City Rep

Administrators: Bill Rivard, Bob Fitts, Brent Hilliard, Rod Weston

Media: Steve Blake: The Newport Daily Express; Joseph Gresser: The Caledonian-Record

Student Council: none

Faculty Forum: Helen Poulin

Guests: none

Mr. Rivard, Principal, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and asked Mr. Fitts to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. **Mr. Rivard asked for approval of the minutes of February 20, 2007. The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted (S. Brochu/M. O’Gorman).**

R. Geisel reported that Tim DelaBruere, the newly elected Newport City board member, was unable to attend tonight’s meeting as he had an electronics class and could not break that commitment, but that he would definitely be at the next meeting. K. Canning reported he was re-elected; and A. Amalixsen reported he was re-elected and had been sworn in. H. Morse reported his term was up next year.

Elect Chair

Mr. Rivard asked for nominations for board chair. **S. Brochu nominated A. Amalixsen, seconded by P. Moskovites.** Mr. Rivard asked twice more for nominations; there were none. **S. Brochu moved that nominations cease and that the clerk cast one ballot for A. Amalixsen as chair, seconded by M. O’Gorman.** A. Amalixsen was elected as chair and took over the meeting.

Elect Vice-Chair

A. Amalixsen asked for nominations for vice-chair. **S. Brochu nominated P. Moskovites, seconded by R. Geisel.** A. Amalixsen asked twice more for nominations; there were none. **S. Brochu moved that nominations cease and that the clerk cast one ballot for P. Moskovites as vice-chair, seconded by M. O’Gorman.** P. Moskovites was elected vice-chair.

Elect Clerk

A. Amalixsen asked for nominations for clerk. **S. Brochu nominated R. Geisel for the clerk position, seconded by H. Morse.** A. Amalixsen asked twice more for nominations; there were none. **S. Brochu moved that nominations cease and that the clerk cast one ballot for R. Geisel as clerk, seconded by M. O’Gorman.** R. Geisel was elected clerk.

Elect Truant Officer

A. Amalixsen asked for nominations for Truant Officer. **S. Brochu moved the board elect the Orleans County Sheriff’s Department as their truant officer. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/M. O’Gorman).**

Designate Official Media

S. Brochu moved the board nominate WMOO/WIKE, The Caledonian-Record, the Newport Daily Express and The Chronicle as their official media. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/K. Canning).

Set Meeting Dates/Times

S. Brochu moved the board hold their meetings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/K. Canning).

NCS/OENSU Policy & Strategic Planning Committees

K. Canning nominated R.M. Mayhew to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee and M. O’Gorman to serve on the Policy Committee. The motion was unanimously approved (K. Canning/S. Brochu).

Committee Structure

A. Amalixsen stated he had been very pleased with the strength of the board’s committees and work that had been done last year; he distributed the forms to all board members present and asked them to complete them tonight or to give them to him by Friday; that he would rank them and form them. He recommended the one committee that be left as is, was the negotiations committee as they were in the middle of negotiations. R.M. Mayhew reminded the committee they were scheduled to meet next Tuesday. A. Amalixsen appointed the same members to the negotiations committee. J. Rosenberg suggested he do the same with the WDC committee as that work was also in progress. Mr. Fitts reported bids won’t be opened until March 27th and A. Amalixsen stated he would like to wait to appoint the remaining committees and have the freedom to recognize the skills of the new board members.

Administrative Reports

Bill Rivard, Principal

HSTW

Mr. Rivard noted he reported on this at their last board meeting.

Field Trip Request

Mr. Rivard reported Crystal Britch and Matt Speroni were again seeking to have a field trip next year to Italy and Greece; that if they had students signed up by March 15th they could get a better price. Mr. Fitts noted Sally Fraize started this trip about 4 years ago and when she retired Crystal Britch took it over. S. Brochu noted board approval would only be for the field trip and not fund raisers for it. **S. Brochu moved the board approve the field trip. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/K. Canning).**

Mr. Rivard reported he also had a personnel/contractual issue for executive session.

Career Center Director, Bob Fitts

RAB

Mr. Fitts noted he reported on this at their last meeting.

Land Lab Building

Mr. Fitts reported he was there today; that they would be moving into that building in about a month; that it was coming along very nicely; adding the board might want to take a look at it. He reported they would be moving 5 programs into the building in April.

Main Campus Construction Plans

Mr. Fitts reviewed the bidding process with the board; he noted it started officially on February 22nd; that the bid documents he had were prepared and approved by the construction manager and architect. He reported the bidding process had been advertised in trade publications, including regional issues; as well as Northern New England trade journals; that those journals go to every registered contractor in New England. He reported there were about 50 contractors here; that they did a building walk-through; and that bids would be submitted by March 27th. Mr. Fitts noted the construction manager would award the bids; that they generally go to the lowest bidder. He stated they hoped to be able to begin on April 16th.

Mr. Fitts reported they were given a bit of a curve today; adding he spoke to Mr. Rivard and Mr. Hilliard about it. He reported they will lose the entire faculty lot, which will need to be used for a staging area. He noted they would be looking at alternative sites and had already started making contacts; adding there would also be 75 construction workers on site for the next year and half. Mr. Rivard reported they have calls into people with property close to the school, as well as the City Manager. Mr. Rivard reported that Mr. Fitts would address the entire faculty at their next faculty meeting on Tuesday.

Mr. Hilliard informed the board they just learned they won't be able to use the bus garage after April break, due to the start of construction. He reported he had a call into Keith Gray to see if they could potentially rent a bay for a couple of months. Mr. Hilliard noted that things change from day to day; that originally they thought they could use the current bus garage until the end of the school year. S. Brochu stated the operation's committee would need to meet to discuss these issues.

Ms. Poulin stated the administration was right to let everyone know what to expect during the construction project. Mr. Fitts reported they would be asking contractors to plan accordingly for noise levels and start those projects later in the day; adding they would do the real heavy duty things during both summers of the project. Mr. Fitts noted that a lot of people in his end of the building have done a lot of sacrificing; that some will now have smaller spaces and some losing their space. He reported that he and Ms. Randall will be moving into a construction trailer in front of the building; and not be in their offices again until next March. He noted construction should not affect A or B wings.

Faculty & Student Council Representatives

Mr. Poulin reported that more teachers were working with kids during Academic Success Block C, and the kids were getting more effective help. Mr. Rivard stated he appreciates Ms. Poulin attending the board meetings; and also her positive comments; noting that when teachers expressed concern about the Power School program Ms. Poulin said it was a good program. Ms. Poulin stated it is a great program, adding it is working.

S. Brochu asked Mr. Rivard about the basketball team. Mr. Rivard noted they set a school record for 19 wins: the most in the history of the school; that they made it to the final four and went down in a tough battle. Mr. Rivard noted there had been a lot of community support for the team and the outstanding season they had. Mr. Rivard stated he would see if he could get the team to come to a future board meeting to be recognized by the board.

Finance/Operation's Committee

S. Brochu reported that he, R. Cartee and Mr. Hilliard attending a Newport City Planning Committee meeting; that the committee had given Mr. Tanguay instructions as to how he needed to move forward on the proposed bus garage site.

Mr. Hilliard reported the current purchase and sales agreement expires on March 15th, adding that Mr. Tanguay requested another 30 days.

S. Brochu moved the board authorize the board chair to sign an extended contract with Mr. Tanguay. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/J. Rosenberg).

Negotiation's Committee

R.M. Mayhew reported their next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 13th at 5:30; adding an additional meeting has been scheduled for March 20th, but that it would be held at 4:00 p.m. so they would be finished by the next board meeting the same evening at 6:30.

Community Relations Committee

A. Amalixsen noted the budget passed due to the fruits of that committees' labor. R. Geisel noted it was due to the work people had done on their own as well as the informational flyer put out by the committee.

Mr. Rivard noted the action planning meeting had been re-scheduled from February 14th to March 20th. K. Canning noted the chair of the new education committee would also serve on the action planning group.

J. Rosenberg reminded the board that the Commissioner would be at NCUHS on March 12th to conduct one of his regional informational meetings on his White Paper and urged board members to attend.

P. Moskovites asked the board to talk about their town meetings and school budgets; noting they must all have stories. He reported that Charleston cut 2 full-time teachers; and even with that their budget went up by 3.2% as those saving were offset by special education costs. He reported Charleston town voters want boards to start doing something about costs. He noted it was not an issue of who pays for the funding; but changing who was responsible for what part of education; noting there has been comments that the legislature should take over special education; adding the boards should take an active part in this. He noted people were quite supportive, but they did have a serious discussion; that it is an untenable situation; adding unfunded mandates came up again and again.

H. Morse noted that Jay's budget goes up about 8% every year, but people were getting tired of that. R.M. Mayhew reported that Troy had a fund balance they used to offset deficits; that there was heavy discussion about special education costs; and that townspeople couldn't fathom a special education tuition of \$26,000, noting that is more than some people make in a year. K. Canning reported Lowell's elementary budget passed with very little discussion or challenge, which was unusual from years past. J. Rosenberg reported that Westfield is very supportive of their children's education.

S. Brochu reported that all school budgets were passed in Derby; that at Town Meeting no questions were asked about the junior high or senior high budgets; adding that Melissa Pettersson did a fantastic job talking about the elementary school budget. R. Geisel stated he agreed with P. Moskovites; that boards must get involved; that he wished there was something they could do proactively with the OENSU board; then have discussion with their legislative body. M. O'Gorman reported that Brighton's went surprisingly well; that there were very few comments from people; adding they had 3 budget meetings prior to Town Meeting: one with 44 in attendance; that budget discussions happened at those meetings; and by the time they got to Town Meeting all issues had been pretty well discussed.

S. Brochu stated he believed all the districts budgets were approved; adding all 3 papers did a good job throughout the year; and he thanked the press for all their help. A. Amalixsen noted the governor was trying to put a cap on education spending; he recognized they had been good stewards keeping costs down to around 8% at NCUHS; also noting that Burlington is about 50% higher in their tuition charges and those numbers can bite them for being good and serving their communities well.

A. Amalixsen stated this board had 3 challenges: focus on things when they can set the target and improve the educational scores; stay on schedule and budget with the construction project; and get the contract negotiations done and employees compensated fairly. He noted those challenges were not beyond doing; that if they focus on a few things and do them right they will find the community supports them.

Superintendent's Report, Dr. Rod Weston
VSBA Board Member Training Dates

Dr. Weston noted this was informational for board members; adding the VSBA would be sending information out.

2007-2008 School Calendar

Dr. Weston noted the calendar had been sent to all employees for input; that it was for the boards' review, adding they would need to vote on it at their next meeting. He asked if any board member had concerns or suggestions to please email them to him.

Dr. Weston stated he also had contractual issues to be discussed in executive session.

At 7:45 p.m. S. Brochu moved the board enter executive session for personnel and contractual issues, inviting Dr. Weston and Mr. Rivard. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/H. Morse).

At 8:53 pm. S. Brochu moved the board return to open session. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/R.M. Mayhew).

R.M. Mayhew moved the board grant medical leave for Employee A; that the board will pay 30 days of medical insurance or the month of March; with Mr. Rivard to gather further information and present to the board prior to the end of the month at which time the board may consider extending this benefit. The motion was unanimously approved (R.M. Mayhew/S. Brochu).

There being no further business to discuss the board unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. (J. Rosenberg/S. Brochu).

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Rubino
Recording Secretary